



August 25, 2005 -- Study Confirms: Teens Drive More Riskily with Passengers

Researchers can't yet say precisely why it happens, but surveys show that teenage drivers, both male and female, tend to tailgate and exceed speed limits more if there is a teenage male passenger in the front seat. That's in addition to the fact that previous studies have shown that crash rates for 16- and 17-year-old drivers are higher in the presence of teen passengers in general, something parents and trainers of new drivers should keep in mind, said the author of a study being published in the journal *Accident Analysis and Prevention*. Researchers declined to try to identify scientifically why teens are more likely to engage in risky driving behavior in the presence of teen passengers, but they speculated that "Teen passengers may distract the driver or change the driver's attitudes or emotions in ways that are not yet clear." It's hoped that another study currently under way that involves putting electronic monitoring equipment in vehicles with teen drivers will yield some answers, enabling researchers to develop ways to prevent the risky behaviors. Until then, the researchers advise, "Parents and teens need to be aware of a tendency that teens appear to have toward risky driving when other teens are in the vehicle with them." The studies are sponsored by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development in the U.S. National Institutes of Health.